

Primeval: Enter the Incomappleux inspires action on park proposal

by Jan McMurray

An ancient rainforest with 2,000-year-old trees stands in the Selkirk mountains along the Incomappleux River, just south of Glacier National Park. The film *Primeval: Enter the Incomappleux* takes viewers on a journey to this awe-inspiring place—the “crown jewel” of the proposed Selkirk Mountain Caribou Park.

Presented by the Valhalla Wilderness Society (VWS), the film premiered in Nelson at the Capitol Theatre on November 9. It will be showing at the Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival later this month, and will be on tour around the province over the next

year in an effort to put public pressure on the government to create the Selkirk Mountain Caribou Park.

At the Nelson premiere, VWS representatives urged the audience to write letters to the BC government and federal Minister of Environment to ask for the creation of the park. Filmmaker Damien Gillis, biologist Dr. Toby Spribille, and VWS reps were in attendance to introduce the film and answer questions. Craig Pettitt of VWS made a presentation about the park proposal, which the society has been working on for the last 10 years.

The proposed park covers 156,000 hectares of land that would provide

connectivity between the existing Glacier National, Goat Range Provincial, and Bugaboo Provincial Parks. The Lardeau, East Creek, Duncan, Westfall, and Incomappleux drainages fall within the proposed park area.

“The Selkirks once had a healthy number of mountain caribou but we have been drastically altering their habitat and we are losing these animals,” said Pettitt.

Despite the BC government’s Mountain Caribou Recovery Implementation Plan (MCRIP), which took a significant amount of caribou habitat out of the timber harvesting land base, the number of caribou in the Central Selkirk herd has dropped from 88 in 2008 to 35 in 2016. “The MCRIP is a dismal failure,” Pettitt said.

Thanks to the work of biologist Dr. Toby Spribille, a tremendous number of species of lichens have been found in the Incomappleux, and some are new to science. Because of Spribille’s work, there is a temporary moratorium on logging in the Incomappleux. However, the moratorium could be lifted at any moment, and there are approved cutblocks in the Incomappleux Rainforest.

“When these forests are cut, we’ll never see forests of this stature again,” Pettitt said.

Pettitt explained that when forests are cut, they are replanted as tree farms, with commercial value and profit in mind. “So the biodiversity is lost,” he said, “and the new, young forests don’t support mountain caribou. Mountain caribou depend on old-growth forest.” In the winter, their staple food is the lichen that grows on the ancient trees.

Pettitt also said that BC Timber Sales is currently building a logging

road on the west side of Duncan Lake into Puddingbowl Creek, another area in the park proposal. “We’ve been finding caribou there, so building this road will have quite an impact on these animals,” he said.

Dr. Spribille first went into the Incomappleux in 2002, after meeting the late Colleen McCrory the year before. “I have been back 14 times,” he said. “I have come back again and again because of the very special things going on here.”

He stressed the tremendous biodiversity of the Incomappleux Rainforest.

Filmmaker Damien Gillis, co-producer and co-director of the award-winning *Fractured Land*, said he felt privileged to work in the company of people who were working so hard to protect these areas. “There are so few places like the Incomappleux where you can experience the world before humans,” he said.

Visit vws.org for more information.

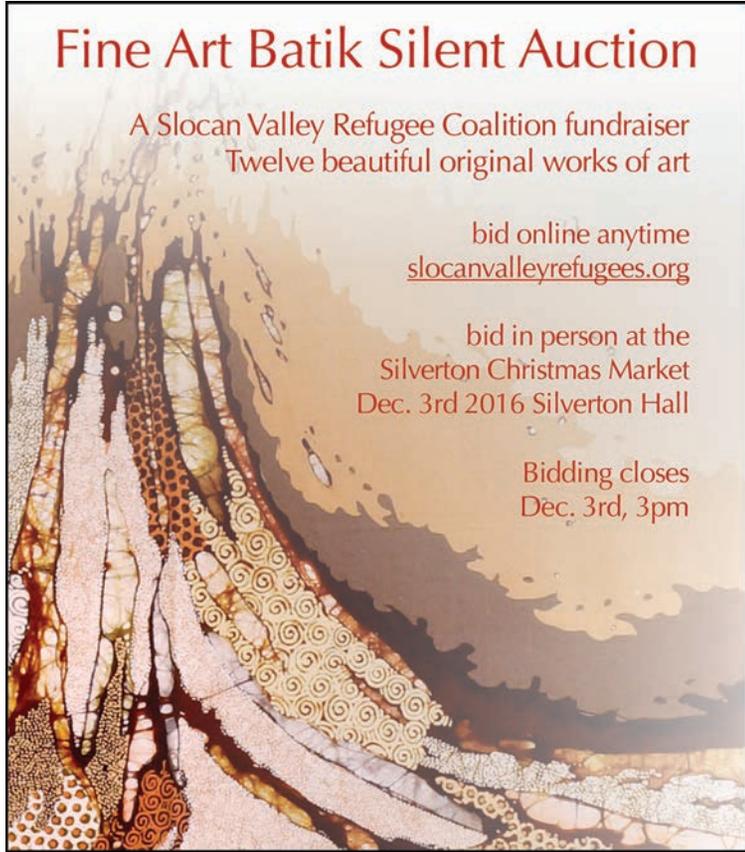
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Neil Muth, president and CEO of the Columbia Basin Trust since 2005, has passed away. The announcement of his sudden passing was made November 12 by his family in conjunction with CBT. Muth is pictured here with his wife, Cathy, and his three children: John (wife Angela), Emily (fiancé Paul) and Hilary. The Trust was expected to make a full statement early this week.

Slocan Valley Wildfire Protection Plan gets support from the province

submitted

The Slocan Integral Forestry Co-operative (SIFCo) continues to work for wildfire protection for the Slocan Valley, an issue that is becoming increasingly urgent with climate change. After helping to secure \$430,000 earlier this fall for forest fuel management around New Denver, SIFCo just received confirmation that the Province is supporting its Slocan Valley Landscape Level Wildfire Protection Plan with a commitment of \$425,000.

The funding was received from the newly formed Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC) which aims to advance environmental and resource stewardship of forests.

This FESBC funding is for the first year of a five-year plan released by SIFCo in June of this year.

“Over the last eight years we have focused on protecting villages, homes and infrastructure,” says manager Stephan Martineau “but all these

investments are still at risk if we do not implement a landscape-level wildfire protection plan. The Province and FESBC recognize the need to manage forest fuels at a landscape level, because this type of work will reduce the chances of a catastrophic event such as the Fort McMurray fire of spring 2016.”

The Strategic Wildfire protection plan for the Slocan Valley is the first of its kind done by a tenure holder.

“We hope that lessons learned with this pilot project will help others in the province, and that working together we will continue to make BC more prepared when it comes to wildfires.”

Funds will go toward fuel management on more than 100 hectares of land as well as ecosystem restoration in selected areas. Two public meetings are planned for mid-December to share the overall plan with residents: December 13 at the Winlaw Hall and December 14 at the Knox Hall in New Denver. Both meetings start at 7 pm.



Post treatment look of the forest near the cemetery in New Denver. SIFCo treated this area in 2010-11.

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Co-op Gold Crispy Chicken Bake-ready Bucket o' Chicken	1 kg	\$13.99	Co-op Gold Cream Cheese Original Block	250g	\$3.99
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